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Organizational meeting for 1991

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 19 February 1991, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

RATIONALIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL (continued) (DP/1991/3)

1. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Governing Council), replying to the questions that had been asked, said he appreciated the support expressed by delegations for the proposals submitted by the Administrator in document DP/1991/3. The success of the measures proposed in that document would depend on close co-operation between the officials of UNDP and the members of the Council and above all on the active role of the Bureau. In reply to the comment made by the United States representative, he said that the Drafting Group was constantly being reminded of the measures proposed and, in particular, when a decision was adopted, the Council would indicate whether it was really necessary to request a report from the Administrator, since such requests added to the Council's programme. Once the need for the report was established, the Governing Council would indicate whether it was for information only or whether it was for debate, in which case a decision would have to be made as to when the report would be examined. Only in that way would it be possible to establish effectively a biennial or triennial cycle for the consideration of items.

2. The Administration had undertaken to reduce the number and length of documents without reducing the level of information provided for the Council. On the contrary, the Administrator had taken steps to improve the contents of the reports and had established a special committee to examine them. With regard to the timely submission of reports, as requested by the representative of the USSR, the secretariat would make every effort to submit the documentation in time and in all languages and would even submit preliminary reports, as it had already been doing.

3. With regard to the grouping of related items, annex I of document DP/1991/L.3 gave an idea of how items could be grouped. With regard to the introduction of biennial or triennial cycles it would depend to a large extent on the decisions of the Governing Council since it was very difficult for the secretariat to decide in what years the various items should be considered. The Council had already given some guidance, for example, in deciding that the activities of the funds entrusted to the Administrator should be considered every two years; on that basis a certain cycle was being established. Similarly, it was for the Council to decide when the respective report was to be submitted.

4. He agreed with the United States representative that the Standing Committee for Programme Matters would perform most of the work to be carried out during the special sessions of the Council, in particular, the approval of the country programmes, which constituted a large volume of work. In reply to the comment by the representative of Cuba with regard to the question of introducing biennial or even triennial cycles for the so-called high-level debate, he pointed out that the Council had made such a request in decision 90/23. It had asked the Administrator to present proposals in that respect after the holding of informal consultations on 2 November. As pointed out in document DP/1991/3, it was proposed as an experiment that in the present year the Council should dispense with the general debate. As

(Mr. Kirdar)

for the level of participation in the debate, it was for members and Governments to decide that question. In a high-level debate, the Council would have to decide what specific items would be considered. It had already decided to specify the items a year in advance so as to be able to gather the substantive documentation; in that respect the last paragraph of document DP/1991/3 stated that perhaps the Governing Council might wish to define the subject which would be of the greatest interest to the Council and would therefore ensure high-level consideration.

5. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) said that the agenda of UNDP was becoming increasingly complex as the years went by but that undoubtedly the Council's work could be rationalized. He supported the Administration's proposal in that regard but stressed that, with all the variety of special areas and programmes, the guidance and supervision of the Council was necessary. It was to be hoped that the new Standing Committee for Programme Matters would give the participating countries a better picture of the activities of UNDP. He also supported the proposal to establish biennial cycles for the high-level debate and, with regard to the reduction of the volume of reports, he referred specifically to the evaluation reports to be submitted in June. Finally, he requested the Secretariat to submit a list of those reports.

6. Mr. DE MOZOTA (France) welcomed the reduction of the Council's sessions but felt that the measures proposed in document DP/1991/3 were still insufficient. He agreed that member States should limit the number of reports they requested and stressed that the rules of distribution should be strictly applied. The reports must be concise and must be submitted in all the working languages, so that they could be used in the meetings. The missions should be regularly informed on the progress of the documentation and any report that had not been received in advance should be withdrawn from the agenda. The explanations provided in the meeting by the UNDP officials must be more specific and made by the person directly responsible. The Council should establish a clearer order of priority for the questions examined and a division between the reports which had to be debated and those solely designed to provide information. The introduction of biennial cycles should be encouraged, beginning with the high-level debate, and in that respect the Administrator might submit a list to the Council. Finally, he supported the request by the delegation of Switzerland concerning the list of evaluation reports to be examined in June.

7. Mr. DE BEER (Netherlands) said that, once the programme had been approved, it would be possible to draw up a list of the items to be dealt with in 1991 and possibly in the following year, so that the members and secretariat would be clear as to the date of submission of the corresponding reports.

8. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Governing Council), replying to the requests of the representatives of Switzerland and France, said that the secretariat had already taken steps to distribute certain evaluation reports to delegations, at least in the case of three of the reports mentioned. With regard to the question raised by the Netherlands representative, he said that, once the programme had been approved, there would be a clearer idea of the items to be considered during the present year, although that was not necessarily the case in the following year.

9. The PRESIDENT said that the members of the Council and of UNDP, in informal consultations held in November 1990, had considered practical measures to rationalize the work of the Council, which the Secretary had just explained. The ideas concerning documentation were already being put into practice. When item 6 of the agenda was considered, the Council could adopt specific measures concerning the new proposals regarding the procedures for the regular sessions of the Council.

10. If there were no objections, he would assume that the Council wished to take note of document DP/1991/3 together with the statements made by the Secretary of the Council and the representatives who had spoken.

11. It was so decided.

STANDING COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME MATTERS (DP/1991/4)

12. Mr. EDGREN (Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation) said that document DP/1991/4 outlined the general mandate of the Standing Committee but did not go into the more substantive question as to how that mandate should be interpreted. The document had been prepared in pursuance of decision 1990/23 of the Governing Council in which it stipulated that the Standing Committee would replace the Committee of the Whole and its Working Group. The document presented the Administrator's understanding of the Council's wishes for the functioning and regard to the administrative arrangements for the Standing Committee. That understanding was based on decision 1990/23 of the Governing Council, on previous decisions concerning the two bodies which had been replaced and on informal consultations held at the beginning of November 1990.

13. There was a consensus on most of the questions but there were two which required later debate by the Council: the first concerned the question of how to facilitate the participation of representatives of low-income countries in the intersessional meetings of the Standing Committee; the second concerned arrangements for field visits by members of the Standing Committee. Perhaps the Council should resolve those questions so that the Standing Committee could begin its work without delay. However, the exact scope of the Standing Committee's mandate had not been clarified. The Administrator felt that it was for the Governing Council and the Standing Committee itself to decide that question.

14. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) said that he believed the Standing Committee would be a very useful mechanism for improving the work of the Governing Council. The proposals contained in document DP/1991/4 regarding the membership and mandate of the Standing Committee were fully acceptable. All members of the Governing Council should be members of the Standing Committee, and participation in its deliberations should be open to all other members of UNDP. He hoped that there was consensus on having its mandate, described in a very broad way, include also issues relating to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

15. As to the actual functioning of the Standing Committee, it should in principle be chaired by the President of the Governing Council, who should, however, be able to designate another member of the Bureau to conduct the Committee's work. The procedures governing its work should follow as closely as possible those of the

(Mr. Rohner, Switzerland)

Budget and Finance Committee, particularly with respect to the submission of reports to the Plenary Council. The practice of the Budget and Finance Committee provided a precedent, and its adoption by the Standing Committee would help it to function efficiently. The agenda items to be dealt with by the Standing Committee in the course of a given year should generally be determined at the February organizational session of the Governing Council and be revised, as needed, at the start of the June session. In February, the Council could also decide on the necessity for intersessional meetings, which should be kept to a minimum and in no case exceed two per year.

16. Switzerland wished to propose that the following, non-exhaustive list of items should be included in the Standing Committee's agenda for the coming year: implementation of selected country programmes; progress reviews of regional and interregional programmes; evaluations of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990 (UNPAAERD) and the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1990s for the least developed countries; new country programmes; proposed guidelines for the elaboration of country programmes and for mid-term reviews, programme approaches and national execution. The Council should, in addition, consider the possibility of convening an intersessional meeting of the Standing Committee to discuss the outcome of the above-mentioned evaluations and to exchange views on the proposed guidelines, preferably before the June session.

17. Field visits had been included in decision 90/23 on the understanding that they would be an integral part of the work of the Standing Committee, giving it a deeper understanding of the practical aspects of programme execution and at the same time enabling representatives of recipient countries to gain invaluable experience for their own national work. That meant that the total number of participants in the field visits must be as large as possible but on the other hand that the visits must not place an undue burden on UNDP or the host countries. His delegation therefore proposed increasing the total number of field visits and reducing the number of participants in each visit; four field visits could be conducted annually, covering two countries each, with six participants in each visit. That would mean that 40 countries could be visited in the course of a programming cycle and each of the members of the Governing Council would have the opportunity to participate at least once in one of the visits. The Administrator would each year propose a series of field visits at the organizational meeting, and the Council would determine the specific programme aspects to be considered during the visits in the coming year. At the June session, the Administrator could propose a first series of field visits to take place in the second half of 1991.

18. With regard to the financing of the participation of representatives of recipient countries in the intersessional meetings of the Standing Committee, each low-income developing country should be given travel expenses and a per diem for one representative specializing in technical co-operation matters, to be paid out of the UNDP core budget. The same would apply to the field visits, which also constituted an essential tool in the Standing Committee's work and should therefore also be funded from the UNDP core budget, although all donor countries and

(Mr. Rohner, Switzerland)

recipient countries in a position to do so should pay for the expenses of their participant. That would entail a maximum annual cost to the UNDP core budget of $80,000. In conclusion, his delegation was ready to participate in drawing up a draft decision on the item under consideration.

19. Mr. KRAMER (Canada) said that his delegation was in general agreement with the administrative arrangements proposed in document DP/1991/4 and felt that the Standing Committee ought to become an important and constructive instrument for substantially improving UNDP programming and the impact its activities would have on development. Regarding the administrative aspect, it did not seem advisable to propose as many as two intersessional meetings in addition to up to two field visits, because that would mean that for some delegations there could be as many as six activities in all each year. That could create a management problem for some members of the Council and even perhaps for some members of the Administration. Perhaps one could consider the possibility of reducing the total number of activities.

20. With regard to financing, his delegation supported the idea of having the cost of the participation of representatives of the low-income countries paid out of the administrative budgets of UNDP and UNFPA. The groups for the field visits should be composed in accordance with paragraph 27 of document DP/1991/4, in order to give all members a chance to participate.

21. As to the objectives and agenda of the Standing Committee, his delegation was disappointed that meetings were being proposed for February and June, which would seem to indicate a continuation of the current pro forma programming approach. As the Administrator had said in his introductory statement, the Standing Committee added a completely new dimension and what was involved was not merely the Committee of the Whole under a new name. It was important for the future effectiveness and financing of UNDP that the Standing Committee should study the basic question of the real impact of UNDP programming on development. Consequently, the formulation of programmes and of evaluation criteria was an item that should be included as soon as possible in the Standing Committee's agenda. Recognizing that there was perhaps a certain amount of preparatory work to be done in connection with such an agenda item, his delegation proposed that it should be the first agenda item for the June session or that it should be dealt with very early in an intersessional meeting.

22. The Standing Committee should not be seen merely as a mechanism for administering the details of national programmes but rather as an opportunity for UNDP to avoid marginalization and to grow. To achieve that goal would require a collective effort to assess the overall functioning and consistency of the current programming, and a formulation of relevant criteria that would ensure a role for UNDP in the processes of development in the future. In conclusion, his delegation concurred with the remarks of the representative of Switzerland and was prepared to participate in preparing a draft decision on the question.

23. Mrs. ESKELINEN (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that they attached great importance to the questions dealt with in document DP/1991/4. The functioning of the Standing Committee was one of the main issues before the current organizational meeting and the Council must do what was required to have the Standing Committee already begin its work during the 1991 session of the Governing Council. The rules of procedure and the arrangements for the submission of reports by the Standing Committee should be very simple in order to allow it to deal effectively with UNDP and UNFPA issues. As to the timing of the Standing Committee's meetings, the Nordic countries preferred the holding of two intersessional meetings and proposed that the first should be held in early April 1991 and the second in early fall 1991, thus avoiding an overlap with the General Assembly.

24. The mandate as described in general terms in document DP/1991/4 did not include all the programming questions that the Council would have to consider, among them the links between strategy and guidelines on the one hand and national, regional and interregional programmes on the other. The Standing Committee should also ensure that closer connections were established between the national, regional and interregional programmes. Of course, the Governing Council should have the power at any session to include additional items in the Standing Commitee's agenda and to approve that agenda. In addition, the Standing Committee should consider as soon as possible the use of the mid-term reviews as a tool for guiding the work of UNDP, a matter to which the delegations of the Nordic countries attached particular importance. The Standing Committee should, in addition, see to it that the items approved by the Council were incorporated into the country programmes. One possibility would be to arrange to have the country programme review done by the Standing Committee in two stages.

25. Lastly, the delegations of the Nordic countries agreed to the proposal in document DP/1991/4 regarding field visits and believed that UNDP funds should be allocated to facilitate participation by all Council members in those visits.

26. Mr. BARAC (Romania), referring to some of the pending issues mentioned in document DP/1991/4, said that his delegation agreed that field visits should be limited to a maximum of two per year, that the duration of each visit should not normally exceed 10 days, including travel time, and that each 10-day visit should not cover more than two countries. In order to save time and money, the two countries should preferably be selected from the same region. His delegation also agreed that the field visits should be open to all members of the Standing Committee for Progamme Matters and that the composition of the groups should rotate in order to enable each member of the Council to participate in one field visit during its term of membership.

27. It would be preferable if the members of each group were from the same region as the countries to be visited in order to reduce travel costs. As far as the composition of the group was concerned, Romania fully supported the proposal contained in paragraph 27 of document DP/1991/4; nevertheless if the visits began in 1991, priority should be given to Council members whose mandates expired that year. Field visits constituted an essential part of the governance of UNDP and

(Mr. Barac, Romania)

UNFPA and, therefore, Romania supported the idea that the costs involved should be provided for in the administrative budgets of UNDP and UNFPA under a separate heading.

28. Mr. DE MOZOTA (France) said that his delegation supported document DP/1991/4, which reflected the main concerns of his country, namely, extending the mandate of the Standing Committee to cover UNFPA programme matters, participation open to all members of the Programme, a mandate which took over that of the two bodies being replaced by the Standing Committee and rules of procedure based on those of the Budget and Finance Committee.

29. With regard to the number and length of sessions, at least at the beginning some flexibility would be necessary to enable the Standing Committee to find its own pace. His delegation supported the proposals by the Governing Council concerning field visits, which France considered very important; each visit should include on the average two or three countries. Arrangements should be made to facilitate participation by representatives of low-income countries in such visits, which could be financed through the regular budget of UNDP.

30. Mr. SAHLMANN (Germany) said that the mandate of the Standing Committee for Programme Matters should include not only the consideration of UNDP and UNFPA programmes, but also those of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development and other UNDP funds. With regard to the composition of the Standing Committee, his delegation felt that all members of the Governing Council should be members of the Committee, as in the case of the Budget and Finance Committee. Furthermore, participation in the Standing Committee and the Budget and Finance Committee should be open to all members of the Programme. His delegation also supported the mandate of the Standing Committee, as set forth in document DP/1991/4.

31. With regard to reporting and decisions, like the Budget and Finance Committee, the Standing Committee should elaborate consensus proposals without dissenting views. If there was no consensus on a certain matter, the Standing Committee should recommend that the Governing Council should postpone its consideration of the matter until the Committee's next session. His delegation supported the proposals concerning the frequency of field visits, the selection of countries and regions and the programme aspects. The proposed composition of the group, however, seemed to be too inflexible. While his delegation supported in principle a rotation system in order to allow all Governing Council members to participate in such visits and also the detailed proposal by the delegation of Switzerland, he suggested that the question of field visits should be reviewed after two years of experience.

32. Mr. SHOJI (Japan) said that continued attention should be given to the functioning of the Standing Committee to ensure that it fully carried out its mandate. His delegation supported the proposal by Switzerland and the views concerning the membership of the Committee, its mandate, the agenda, reporting and the frequency of its meetings, including the possibility of holding two

(Mr. Shoji, Japan)

intersessional meetings. Likewise, Japan supported the measures to facilitate participation by representatives of lower-income developing countries through funding from UNDP resources.

33. Field visits would make it possible to improve UNDP programmes on the basis of first-hand information and a clearer understanding of field activities. In that regard, his delegation felt that a maximum of three visits per year with the participation of 16 to 18 members should be made and that the costs of all participants should be financed under a separate heading in the administrative budget.

34. Mrs. KEPPENS (Belgium), referring to agenda item 4, said that her delegation supported the idea that the Council should consider questions every two years and should draw up a biennial programme of work to serve as a basis for future sessions. She also supported the proposal in paragraph 13 of document DP/1991/3 to hold a high-level debate every two years.

35. The establishment of the Standing Committee for Programme Matters was an excellent way to rationalize and optimize the work of the Council and the Committee's main responsibility should be the elaboration, execution and review of programmes, which previously had been adopted in a rubber-stamp manner. Field visits would be one of the basic ways in which the Committee would carry out its work and should not be limited to simple fact-finding trips but should be used to establish a link with the agenda of the Governing Council, including the adoption of new country programmes.

36. Her delegation had certain reservations concerning the proposal by the Administrator to apply a rotation system for participation in field visits. Although it was without doubt important that the number of participants in each visit should not be large and that all countries should be able to participate in an inspection visit at least once during the term of their membership, a country with special knowledge of a particular programme should in any event be able to participate in it. For that reason, it would be advisable to ensure a certain amount of flexibility in the membership of the teams. With regard to the frequency of visits, although her delegation supported on a trial basis the proposed two visits per year, she felt that that number should be increased gradually to include an average of ten programmes per year, which could be achieved by organizing four or five visits. With regard to financing, Belgium supported the idea of using resources from the UNDP administrative budget in order to defray the cost of participation by delegations from low-income countries, for example countries whose per capita GNP did not exceed $750 per year.

37. Mr. DE BEER (Netherlands) said that he generally supported the views expressed by the representative of Switzerland concerning the work of the Standing Committee, to which he would like to add two comments. First, field visits should not be an objective in themselves, but should be directly linked to the work of the Standing Committee and, in order to make best use of them, it would be necessary to set up a standard system for submitting reports to the Governing Council. Second, the

(Mr. De Beer, Netherlands)

visits should be coordinated with the Joint Consultative Group on Policy in order to avoid any duplication and also with UNDP field representatives.

38. With regard to the agenda of the Standing Committee, his delegation felt that the questions to be dealt with by the Committee should be determined on the basis of the proposed programme of work for 1991. For example, the matters relating to programme execution and planning and part of the item concerning UNFPA might be suggested.

39. Mr. CHECAV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had no difficulty in accepting the proposals contained in document DP/1991/4, particularly since they were based on a decision taken by the Council the previous year. The proposals put forward by Switzerland were extremely interesting. Nevertheless, he wished to raise some questions concerning the field visits, for example, which mechanisms would be used, who would have the responsibility of determining the composition of the groups and how that would be done. His delegation also wished to know whether relations between the candidates themselves for membership in a group would be taken into account. As the representative of Belgium had pointed out, it was possible that participants who lacked experience concerning certain countries or programmes might be selected for specific visits. In that regard, participation in visits should be organized in the best possible way.

40. Mr. SALES (Mozambique) referred to paragraph 16 of document DP/1991/4 and requested more concrete information on what would be done in order to prevent the meetings of the Standing Committee from coinciding with plenary meetings. Referring to paragraph 19 on field visits, his delegation would appreciate clarification as to the kind of report to be submitted and further explanations in that regard. Concerning the coverage of the UNFPA field programme by those visits, consideration should also be given to covering other programmes, and the manner in which participants in those missions could evaluate the activities conducted in the regions should be determined.

41. Referring to paragraph 25, his delegation would also appreciate clarification as to how field-visit members would participate as observers in mid-term reviews of country programmes and project tripartite reviews.

42. Mr. CABEIRO QUINTANA (Cuba) said that, although the Standing Committee had been established under Governing Council decision 90/23, as far back as the early 1980s, many delegations had requested the establishment of such an organ in order to monitor the operation of programmes in the field. His delegation encountered no problems in document DP/1991/4, and agreed that the Chairman of the Standing Committee should be the President of the Governing Council or a Vice-President appointed by him and the Committee's rules of procedure should be the same as those of the Council. Concerning paragraph 17, his delegation also agreed that the subsistence allowance of representatives from low-income countries should be defrayed so that they could participate in intersessional meetings of the Standing Committee. None the less, his delegation was somewhat disappointed with regard to

(Mr. Cabeiro Quintana, Cuba)

the field visit. In the 1980s, the UNDP budget had been $700 million; the current budget was $1 billion, and yet only two annual visits by eight members each - and a budget of $80,000 - were proposed. If any serious work was to be accomplished, there must be at least twice the number of field visits; in other words, provision should be made for the participation of 32 members and four visits per year. While some delegations had favoured a reduction in the proposed figure, his delegation, on the contrary, believed that it was insufficient and would not constitute a sound point of departure for the work of the Standing Committee.

43. Mrs. DUDIK GAYOSO (United States of America) said that her delegation attached great importance to the mechanism provided by the establishment of the Standing Committee for Programme Matters - building on the experience acquired over the past five years with the Committee of the Whole and its Working Group - in order to intensify the dialogue between the secretariat and all members of the Council, and streamline the work of the Council itself, consistent with paragraph 2 of decision 90/23. The possibility of holding a meeting of the Standing Committee should be exploited immediately in order to consider the question of mid-term reviews and enable the Administrator to present the report on national execution which he had announced during the consultations of November 1990. Her delegation shared the view expressed by Canada and the Nordic countries that the Standing Committee was not just the Committee of the Whole by another name and that it should consider broad programme and strategy issues and the links between those issues and the individual programmes. Her delegation supported the Canadian proposal that the Standing Committee should consider guidelines for the fifth programming cycle and also strongly supported the proposal to initiate a two-stage process for the consideration of country programmes. It also believed that the Standing Committee should consider programme matters relating to UNFPA, the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and other programmes.

44. While sessional meetings of the Standing Committee could be useful, at least two intersessional meetings per year would also be necessary in order to streamline the Council's work effectively. It was to be hoped that, with time, the work of the Standing Committee would even make it possible to shorten the sessions of the Council itself.

45. Regarding working methods, her delegation believed that written reports should be submitted to the Council and that, in the tradition of UNDP, the Standing Committee should seek consensus, a method which had proved effective over the years. Moreover, her delegation agreed that the membership of the Standing Committee should be the same as that of the Council and participation should be open to all members. In order for the deliberations of the Standing Committee to be fruitful, working meetings should be informal, conducive to dialogue and, preferably, held in small rooms, in order to make it easier for the members of the Council and the staff members of the secretariat to work together. The sessions should be organized with the express participation of observers from United Nations agencies and provision should also be made for holding private meetings with members of the secretariat or even among Council members themselves with the sole objective of encouraging a frank exchange of views.

(Mrs. Dudik Gayoso, United States)

46. The purpose of field visits should be agreed by the Standing Committee and the countries to be visited should be selected on the basis of consultations among the Standing Committee, the Administrator and the countries themselves. The visits should also be coordinated with those of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy. Her delegation agreed that there should be four visits per year, that the visits should be prepared by the Standing Committee and that, subsequently, reports should be submitted to the Standing Committee and the Council. None the less, her delegation questioned whether UNDP should continue to contribute resources for the visits organized by the Joint Consultative Group on Policy, since the field visits of the Standing Committee would be an aspect of sound governance and could yield greater dividends for their members than the JCGP visits, which were not as well coordinated. Some financing of field visits against the core budget was acceptable in principle, but the Council should consult the Budgetary and Finance Committee before deciding on a specific amount. It would also be reasonable to finance the participation of low income countries in the intersessional meetings of the Standing Committee.

47. Mr. KANE (Mauritania) expressed satisfaction with document DP/1991/4 and his delegation's belief that the Standing Committee for Programme Matters would facilitate the work of the Governing Council and its members. His delegation agreed with the Mozambican representative that an effort should be made to prevent sessions of the Standing Committee from coinciding with those of the Governing Council and that they should be held immediately before or after the Governing Council meetings so that all delegations could make a more positive contribution to the work of the Council.

48. Concerning the periodic field visits referred to in paragraph 19 of document DP/1991/4, he asked who would be responsible for coordinating the reports and how they should be prepared. Paragraph 25 of the same document indicated that the participation of field-visit members as observers in mid-term reviews of country programmes and project tripartite reviews should be encouraged. He wished to know the extent to which the report on a visit could affect the implementation of that country's programme.

49. Mr. ELLIS (United Kingdom) said that his delegation generally agreed with the contents of document DP/1991/4 and with the statement by the representative of Switzerland. Four field visits should be conducted per year and a small number of persons - six, for example - should participate in them, since that would make each trip more effective. Concerning the experience required of participants in the visits, a question raised by the representative of Belgium, once the Standing Committee determined which themes should be studied on the visits, it would be the responsibility of the countries involved to ensure that the participants invited on a rotating basis had the necessary experience to study the relevant issues and report on them. Lastly, his delegation wished to participate in drafting the decision resulting from the discussion of those matters.

50. Mr. MAYORGA CORTES (Nicaragua) said that his delegation supported the establishment of the Standing Committee for Programme Matters, in the belief that it was an adequate mechanism for evaluating UNDP programmes and projects. The Standing Committee should be an effective mechanism for evaluating the Programme's activities and could play a key role in streamlining the work of the Council. In its reports, it should submit both general and specific recommendations on substantive policy aspects which might require adjustments or major shifts in the activities of the Governing Council and the Programme.

51. The interaction between the Standing Committee and the Governing Council could contribute very vital elements which should at no time result in conflicts with the Council. Improving the reports on the evaluation studies, prepared by either UNDP or outside consultants, was of paramount importance, as they were the basic raw material of the Standing Committee.

52. Mr. EDGREN (Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation) observed that some delegations had suggested that the work of the Standing Committee should concentrate on operational matters, which would place the Committee very close to the decision-making level of UNDP; other delegations felt that the Committee's principal task should be to formulate guidelines and to analyse programming issues which had wide-ranging consequences for the evolution of the Programme. Perhaps the most fruitful approach would be, as the representative of the United States had suggested, to try to use the Committee to promote a dialogue between the Administration and the members of the Council which would be kept within the area of programmes to the extent possible. Field visits should be considered in the context of the objective of promoting dialogue. If the selection of visits and of their participants was governed by objectives that were mainly operational or related to the adoption of decisions, the Standing Committee might experience the frustration of having insufficient time to fully analyse all of the operational factors; on the other hand, it would be extremely useful for the Committee to analyse the programming factors, beginning with evaluations and subsequently continuing with the formulation of programmes.

53. In reply to the question on the drafting of reports on field visits, he noted that those members of the Committee who participated in each visit should be in charge of drafting the report presented to the Standing Committee. The drafting of the reports by the secretariat should be avoided, since they were meant to reflect the opinions of the members of the Standing Committee.

54. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Governing Council) said that he had reminded the Council members on various occasions that their meetings had very idiosyncratic organizational characteristics. The sessions of the Governing Council, as well as its documents, were not financed from the budget of UNDP but from the budget of the United Nations. The Council members should therefore bear in mind the interests of the Secretary-General and the budget of the United Nations. If the Committee proposed the convening of a meeting, it should abide by the procedures established by the General Assembly, under which proposals must be presented to the United Nations Committee on Conferences, whose programme must be approved by the Economic and Social Council. The approval of additional meetings was contingent on the

(Mr. Kirdar)

availability of rooms and conference services. The proposals on the timing of meetings contained in document DP/1991/4 had been made in view of the aforementioned circumstances, and it had been specifically proposed that the regular sessions of the Standing Committee should coincide with the regular and organizational sessions of the Governing Council. It might be appropriate, as previously suggested, to proceed by stages: to hold an initial session of the Committee in June and, if the Council felt that another session was necessary, subsequently to request approval of the latter according to the regular procedure.

55. In reply to the question raised by the representative of Mozambique on the possibility of holding a session of the Standing Committee that did not coincide with plenary meetings, he said that efforts generally would be made to arrange it but that, in order to gain time, it had been proposed that in the current year, during the examination of the country programmes of UNFPA, efforts should also be made to deal with technical cooperation for development funds and other funds of which the Administrator was in charge.

56. With respect to field visits, the number of participants had been calculated by dividing the number of Council members (48) by three; a total of 16 participants was therefore proposed. That figure could be divided into two or even four visits, but if the number of participants was increased to 24, the visits undoubtedly would have greater financial implications.

57. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) said that, although he was aware of the procedures required for the convening of meetings, he would be interested in knowing, before the close of the current session, whether there was any possibility of holding a session prior to the one planned for June.

58. His delegation understood the logic on which the determination of the number of participants in field visits was based, but with respect to the issues of balance among different regions and rotation of delegations, it felt that those objectives could be achieved on either a very short or a longer-term basis. There was no reason why smaller groups could not be organized in order to enhance the effectiveness of the visits; considering that there were 150 country programmes, four visits per year could be made.

59. Mr. BAZAN (Observer for Chile) said that the standards for the convening of the meetings of the various organs had been formulated so that the schedule of conferences could be drawn up methodically and the meetings would not be juxtaposed and would be rationally distributed over the course of the year. Budgetary considerations should therefore be borne in mind and, in consequence, proposals for special sessions should be referred for consideration to the Economic and Social Council, which referred its proposals for consideration to the Committee on Conferences, which, in turn, submitted a recommendation to the General Assembly. In view of that procedure, meetings should be scheduled well ahead of time and there should be sound reasons for the convening of any additional sessions so that the approval of the Committee on Conferences would be ensured.

60. The PRESIDENT proposed that the Bureau should elaborate a draft decision which took into account the conclusions reached with respect to the functioning of the Standing Committee, without prejudice to the informal consultations and contacts currently under way.

61. Mrs. DUDIK GAYOSO (United States of America) recalled that several delegations had offered to participate in the elaboration of a draft decision, and said that their intervention could expedite the process and save work for the secretariat.

62. Mr. KELLAND (Denmark) asked whether the Bureau, after considering the text of the draft decision, would pass it on to the Drafting Group, and whether there would be a debate in the Group.

63. The PRESIDENT said that one of the Vice-Presidents would organize the work of the Drafting Group, without prejudice to the observations of the representative of the United States. The contributions of the delegations which had offered to participate would be taken into account at the first meeting of the Bureau, and their participation in the drafting itself might subsequently be requested. It was probable that the Bureau would, in fact, decide that a debate should be held in the Drafting Group. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council agreed to follow the procedure as discussed.

64. It was so decided.

MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL IN 1991 (DP/1991/1, DP/1991/2, DP/1991/L.2, DP/1991/L.3 and Corr.1)

65. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Governing Council) introduced document DP/1991/L.2, containing the provisional agenda of the special session, which would be held when the organizational meeting was completed. He proposed that the Bureau should designate one of its Vice-Presidents to hold informal consultations with delegations on item 2 of the provisional agenda, Preparations for the fifth programming cycle: Special Programme Resources, and on item 3, Agency support costs, so that preliminary versions of the corresponding draft decisions would be available for the debate.

66. Mr. SALES (Mozambique), referring to item 2 of the provisional agenda, noted that in document DP/1991/L.2, where various activities and initiatives that would continue to be supported by the Special Programme Resources were mentioned, two activities had been omitted which were mentioned in document DP/1991/5. He hoped that those omissions would not affect the debates.

67. The PRESIDENT said that he agreed with the representative of Mozambique and that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council approved the provisional agenda and the arrangements for the special session which appeared in document DP/1991/L.2.

68. It was so decided.

69. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Governing Council) introduced document DP/1991/L.3, annex I of which contained the draft provisional agenda for the thirty-eighth session and indicated the manner in which the items had been clustered. Annex II contained the draft programme of work, and document DP/1991/L.3/Corr.1 contained some changes and the programme of work of the Budgetary and Finance Committee. Those agendas reflected the measures which had been adopted to enhance the general efficiency of the Council's work; agenda items of a similar nature had been combined, consideration of similar items had been scheduled for the same meeting and a biennial cycle had been introduced for certain policy questions. As indicated in annex II, it had been recommended that in the first week the Standing Committee should deal with UNFPA and the Council, in plenary session, should consider other funds and programmes and technical co-operation activities, so that in the second week the Drafting Group could draw up the draft decisions.

70. Mr. CLAVIJO (Observer for Colombia) said that the study of the senior management structure entitled A strategy-based senior management structure for UNDP, prepared by Kienbaum and Partners, was of decisive importance, as the administrator had made clear in his statement at the previous meeting, because of its effects on UNDP structure and the results expected by developing countries from UNDP in the current decade. For that reason, it would be appropriate for the Governing Council to examine that document thoroughly as an additional agenda item.

71. Mrs. DUDIK GAYOSO (United States of America) proposed that the Budgetary and Finance Committee should hold 30 meetings during the Council's thirty-eighth session, since 1991 was a budget year. Concerning the suggestion of the observer for Colombia, in her understanding, since the Budgetary and Finance Committee had requested the senior management structure study, it would be its responsibility to consider it. She inquired whether the report would also be examined in plenary session.

72. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Governing Council) said that the representative of the United States was correct; it had been agreed that in budget preparation years, the Budgetary and Finance Committee would hold 30 meetings. The Council had asked the Department of Conference Services to allocate to that Committee meeting rooms and services for 30 meetings. He had understood the observer for Colombia to propose that the senior management study should be examined as a separate agenda item and not as part of consideration of the budget, as originally planned. The Council must decide on that matter, and whether such consideration would take place in plenary sessions.

73. Mr. OSELLA (Observer for Argentina) found the suggestion of the observer for Colombia quite relevant, since the study dealt not only with UNDP administrative and budgetary matters, but its structure and functioning as well.

74. Mr. SAHA (India) also supported the proposal of the Observer for Colombia, because the senior management study would have repercussions not only on budget and finance but also on programming. The Council could decide which aspects of the study to consider in the Budgetary and Finance Committee and which to consider in plenary sessions.

75. Mr. MAYORGA CORTES (Nicaragua) also supported the suggestion of the Observer for Colombia. The study went substantially beyond the mandate of the Budgetary and Finance Committee, and thus should be considered as a separate agenda item, and should be included as such in the agenda of the thirty-eighth Governing Council session. However, that would not prevent the Budgetary and Finance Committee from examining that document both in its individual aspects and as a whole.

76. Mr. HADID (Algeria) and Mr. GATHUNGU (Kenya) supported the suggestion of the Observer for Colombia.

77. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council approved the proposal of Colombia, supported by several delegations, that a separate agenda item should be included regarding the report on the senior management structure.

78. It was so decided.

79. Ms. PRADEL (Germany) said that the Adminstrator had made commendable efforts to reduce the number of items before the thirty-eighth session of the Governing Council and to organize its work efficiently. Other improvements could be made in both areas, however. It was essential to determine which items should be considered biennially or triennially, in order to reduce the number of items even further and to organize work efficiently. Her delegation hoped that the proposals in that regard made in Governing Council decision 90/23 would be submitted to the Council for a decision in June. The matter should be included in the agenda for the session, possibly under item 11.

80. It would be desirable to have a comprehensive annual report by the Administrator covering human development, the Management Development Programme, technical cooperation among developing countries, non-governmental and grass-roots organizations, women in development and the role of UNDP in combating HIV and AIDS, rather than submitting separate reports on those matters, as the notes to the provisional agenda seemed to suggest (DP/1991/L.3, annex I).

81. Some items on the provisional agenda should be examined biennially or triennially, for instance, the three sub-items of the item on special programmes of assistance, implementation of selected country programmes and United Nations technical co-operation activities. That proposal did not suggest that those items were of lesser importance. On the contrary, their importance required in-depth analysis. The best way to achieve that was to examine them every two or three years in depth and not in a routine and superficial manner. In order to reduce even further the number of matters before the Governing Council at its 1991 session, some topics on the agenda could be omitted, such as the United Nations Fund for Science and Technology for Development, and the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration, which had been considered during the 1990 session, and for which no report had been requested. Furthermore, those were questions which were to be examined biennially, as stipulated in Governing Council decision 87/1.

(Ms. Pradel, Germany)

82. Finally, the allocation of items to the plenary session and the Standing Committee required certain changes. Since they related to programme management, special programmes of assistance and reports of the Joint Inspection Unit could be addressed in the Standing Committee more effectively than in plenary sessions. Only sub-items regarding government execution and the fifth programming cycle should be considered both in plenary sessions and in the Standing Committee. The Budgetary and Finance Committee would be better equipped than the plenary session to consider United Nations system regular and extrabudgetary technical cooperation expenditures.

83. Mr. KRAMER (Canada) referring to the draft provisional agenda found in annex I of DP/1991/L.3, items 3, 4 and 5, suggested that in future the agenda should specify which sub-items would be submitted to debate and those for which only reports would be offered.

84. The PRESIDENT said that suggestion would be followed.

85. Mr. ELLIS (United Kingdom), regarding item 4 (c) of the draft provisional agenda for the thirty-eighth session (national execution), proposed that the Council should decide that the question should be addressed in some of its aspects in the Standing Committee in June, and that the plenary should then address it as well.

86. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council approved that proposal.

87. It was so decided.

88. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Governing Council), in answer to a question of the representative of Switzerland, noted that, at the thirty-eighth session of the Governing Council, eight or nine country programmes would be presented and that the exact number would be announced on Wednesday, 20 February.

89. The PRESIDENT said that, with regard to paragraphs 6 to 8 of document DP/1991/L.3, the consideration of the proposal regarding the organization of work of the Council would be postponed until Friday, 22 February in order to have available all documentation on the various proposals.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS (continued)

90. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Group of African States had proposed the candidacy of Mr. Gathungu for Vice-President. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to elect Mr. Gathungu Vice-President by acclamation.

91. Mr. Gathungu (Kenya) was elected Vice-President by acclamation.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.